

October 30, 2005

TAKING GOD AS YOUR PARTNER

Psalm 127 *Based on a sermon idea from Steve May*

INTRODUCTION

A little more than 300 years ago a middle aged man named Nicholas Herman entered a monastery in France and lived the remaining 30 years of his life as a cook. (He was, you might say, a French Friar.) Though his life was lived in obscurity, he accomplished one thing that destined him for greatness. He sought and eventually achieved the ability to walk continually in God's presence.

As he approached the end of his life, he wrote about it in a book that came to be called *The Practice of the Presence of God*. This book, written by an obscure monk who later became known as **Brother Lawrence**, has influenced countless Christians over the centuries, helping them discover the joy of living day-in, day-out in God's presence.

In one of his writings, he said:

"If I were a preacher I would, above all other things, preach the practice of the presence of God. For there is nothing in the world sweeter or more delightful than a continual conversation with God."

For the next four weeks we will talk about how to practice the presence of God--experiencing God in your life 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Today, we're tackling the first step: Taking God as your partner.

Today we'll look at Psalm 127. These verses can be applied to any area of life--our business, our home life, our marriage, and so on. They teach us that God wants to be involved in every area of our lives; everything we do is important to him.

First note that this psalm is attributed to Solomon and when you read it sounds like it comes from another book in the Bible—Proverbs.

Proverb –

- "comparison" or "likeness."
- "Wisdom, the sum of all virtues"
- Pithy sayings
- a brief popular epigram or maxim
- **Popular guidelines for everyday life.**
- **Solomon's guidelines on practicing God's presence 24/7**

Listen to what the Psalmist says...

Ps 127:1-2

Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor in vain.

Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain.

2 In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat-- for he grants sleep to those he loves.

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T.S. There are three things I want you to notice here. First of all, this Psalm tells us...

1. GOD WANTS TO BE IN CHARGE OF OUR RESPONSIBILITIES

This Psalm is saying whatever it is you have to do, God wants to be involved.

- If you've got a house to build,
- God wants to build it. If you've got a city to watch, God wants to guard it.
- You've got a business to run, he wants to run it.
- You've got a family to take care of, he wants to be the Lord of your home.

Whatever it is you do, God wants to be involved; he wants to be in charge.

ILLUSTRATION: When Herman Cain took over as CEO of Godfather's Pizza, the company was in the midst of a severe financial crisis. Within one year, he brought the company into profitability. When he was asked how he did it, he said, "The secret to my success is my faith in Christ and God almighty—and they are no secret! I have to give God the glory in everything I do and in every success I've achieved."

APPLICATION: Whatever it is that you're responsible for God wants to be in charge. He wants to build the house.

What are you responsible for? Write down on the card provided what it is you are responsible for, a home a job a family, a decision, school work, a ministry, a task.

T.S. The second thing this Psalm teaches us is...

2. **GIVING GOD RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR LIFE DOESN'T RELIEVE YOU OF RESPONSIBILITY**

Notice what Solomon says...

(v.1) Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain.

Do you see what he's saying? The builders keep building, even though God is charge of the house. The watchmen keep watching, even though God is guarding the city.

He's saying that we are keep doing our jobs, even though we've given control to God.

→ You give your business to God, but you still show up for work.

→ You give your family to God, but you still spend time with your children.

→ You give your academic life to God, but you still study.

APPLICATION: Giving God responsibility for your life doesn't eliminate your responsibility. However, it empowers you—because even though you're still working hard, you're no longer trusting yourself for the results, you're trusting God for the results.

ILLUSTRATION: Have you ever seen the bumper sticker that says, "God is my co-pilot"? I've seen a variation on that one that is probably more accurate. It says, "God is my pilot. I'm just the co-pilot."

This is more than just a matter of semantics. It's a matter of who's in charge.

Our attitude shouldn't be "God, this is what I'm doing, please bless it."

It should be, "God, show me what you want me to do, how you want me to do it, so I can do things in a way that will bring you honor."

- **Giving God responsibility for your life doesn't relieve you of responsibility; it just puts you in the position of co-pilot.**

T.S. The third thing I want you to notice is...

3. GIVING GOD RESPONSIBILITY IS THE KEY TO FINDING PEACE

Listen to what Solomon said...

(v. 2) In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat—for he grants sleep to those he loves.

"Responsibility" is a heavy-handed word.

It is possible to take our responsibilities so seriously that we worry about them to the point of losing sleep.

You can frequently find yourself frazzled.

There's nothing wrong with getting up early and going to bed late—that comes with having high expectations for yourself—but you don't have to live in a constant state of tension.

You don't have to lie awake at night, staring at the ceiling, wondering how you're going to make it through another day...if you're going to make it through another day.

A wonderful by-product of giving God control is peace of mind.

If you let him build the house, then it becomes his problem, not yours.

When you give God responsibility for your life, he takes it. He handles it.

If you want to live in God's presence 24 hours a day, seven days a week, you can.

You can experience God's presence in your life; you can experience God's protection in your life; you can experience God's peace in your life. It is there. It is available.

CHALLENGE

What do you have to do?

You have to open the door of your heart—and your life—to him. You say, "Jesus, I give my entire life to you. Be the Boss. Take control." If you haven't made that choice, and you want to, you can do it right now.

There are also some here today that have been following Christ for years, but you stubbornly keep putting yourself back in the driver's seat. As a result, you're trying to do everything on your own. You're attempting to build your own house, and watch your own city—and you're discovering that what Solomon said was true:

(v. 2) In vain you rise early and stay up late.

And yet, when you try to do it on your own, there's just no peace. You'll never find peace in your hard work, or in your accomplishments, or in your possessions, or in your relationships, or in anything.

There's only one place of peace in this world: living everyday--all day, day-in, day-out--in the Presence of God.

As we begin this journey together, do you need to make a commitment to God that you are going to dedicate yourself to learning more and more about how to live in his presence?

Do you need to admit that you are tired of the stress and frustrations of living day in and day out without the benefits of His presence?

Then make this closing song the passion of your heart. "Lord we are hungry for more of you."

As we sing, if you want to sit and pray, if you want to kneel, if you want to come forward and pray with an elder. Do as the Spirit of God directs.

